Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1394 - April 30, 2004

A Very Important Note: We urge all readers of this report to also download the audio version of this report at http://www.arnewsline.org/quincy and listen to it. Please pat special attention to the words of ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, and the urgency in his voice as he discusses the latest developments in the fight to keep Broadband Over Powerline technology from encroaching into the Amateur Service bands. There is no way to express in print the very grave nature of this situation. Only by listening for yourself can you truly understand the extreme gravity of the circumstances that our service faces if BPL is introduced nationwide.

The ARNewsline Production Team

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1394 with a release date of Friday, April 30th, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T.

The ARRL takes on the White House over BPL, a power provider says BPL interference to mobile operations has to be tolerated and a ham radio name change. Its called the Dayton Hamvention once again. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1394 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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THE BPL FIGHT: PRES BUSH VS. PRES HAYNIE AND THE ARRL

The ARRL and its president has expressed what they call deep concerns about a speach by United States President George Bush. One where where the leader of the free world says that standards need to be changed to encourage the delivery of Internet access using Broadband Over Poweline technology. Amateur Radio Newsline's Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, is here with more:

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In the boldest and most dramatic move yet in the BPL debate, the ARRL's president Jim Haynie W5JBP, directly appealed to President Bush to abandon his support for BPL technology.

Haynie says Bush's speech last week during the American Association of Community Colleges convention in Minneapolis prompted him to action. In that speech, President Bush stated directly:

"...power lines can be used for broadband technology. So the technical standards need to be changed to encourage that."

"I faxed a letter to the White House cause I wanted to make sure they got it and we followed it up again with the regular U.S. Mail," Haynie says. "And, it'll be curious to see what kind of reaction that we get. I think, like I said, it's ill-advised.

"It's so much hype that the broadband industry has been putting out and I'm sorry to say it looks like the president has been suckered into it a little bit."

Haynie says amateur radio has reached a defining moment in its history and he is issuing a call to arms.

"This is the time that amateur radio is going to have to pull together and speak with one big voice," Haynie says. "And, on our website, we put the contact information and I want everybody to go there and look at it (www.arrl.org) and you can write the president, you can write your congressman, you can write your senators you can call 'em.

"Anything like that is helpful because amateur radio has been around for a lot of years and I'd hate to see it end based on a technology like this that any engineer worth their salt would be able to say, 'Well, this sounds fun but it's just not going to work.' "

Haynie says he wasn't blind-sided by President Bush's remarks, but has questions about his fellow Texan's true understanding of the issue.

"If you go back and read his speech he made in New Mexico, I think it was Albuquerque, he alluded to broadband then just as a general term," Haynie says. "Since that time, the actual term broadband over power line has come into his speech and I know he doesn't write his own speeches, other people do."

Haynie says its likely Bush administration advisers believe BPL is an issue that may have some mileage.

"This is an election year and anything that would seemingly stimulate the economy and create jobs is going to be a real political football and this has just got caught up in it," Haynie says.

Haynie says he is now working with the ARRL's Washington staff to arrange a personal meeting with President Bush to lay out the issue for him. And Haynie says he's hopeful that if Bush sees the damaging effect BPL has on radio spectrum - occupied not by just amateur radio - but police, fire, and government services - he may reconsider.

Haynie says he'll also go in with the findings of the National Telecommunications and Information Agency - the president's own advisory arm on radio frequency spectrum management - to make his case.

"When you get into the actual and engineering report, there's some good stuff there," Haynie says. "And I'm glad to see it. I'm also glad to see that they corroborated a lot of stuff that we said in our data.

"And, it gives us more credibility because NTIA has quoted ARRL in there a number of times in this report. But some of their measurements were even

more - for lack of a better word - devastating to the industry than ours. They're talking as much as 200 meters. That's a long way!"
Haynie says BPL threatens the future of amateur radio as we know it and it's time to step up and be counted:

"I've been a ham for 32 years, 33 years or something like that and this is the worst, most difficult situation I've ever seen amateur radio in," Haynie says. "And I think whether you're interested in licensing restructuring or you're interested in somebody not identifying every 10 minutes on 75 meters or whatever the case, that all pales. It is insignificant to this particular issue.

"So we need to set all these differences aside in the amateur radio community and come together. This is the time."

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, in Philadelphia.

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Since before the first test installations went into operation, the ARRL has been warning the public about the potential for massive radio disruption to vital radio communications that BPL has the potential to cause. More information is on line daily at the ARRL website at http://www.arrl.org (ARNewsline(tm))

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THE BPL FIGHT: NTIA RELEASES ITS BPL IMPACT REPORT

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration has issued its long-awaited report on the interference potential of Broadband over Power Lines. Despite a generally-glowing news release, the report itself identifies significant interference risks from BPL and concludes that the methods currently used for measuring BPL noise levels are inadequate and that more study is needed on such areas as ionospheric propagation of BPL signals.

The full report may be downloaded, either in full or chapter by chapter,from the NTIA website at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/new.html (CQ)

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POWER PROBLEMS: INVESTIGATION INTO BLACKOUT FAULTS ENERGY COMPANIES

Power companies may be interested in reeping huge profits by selling high speed Internet access using BPL technology, but a report says that they disregarded voluntary rules that were intended to ensure the flow of electricity. This is what opened the way for last summer's blackout in eight states and Canada, the report says.

The investigators who prepared the report say that there was a clear understanding long before the blackout last August that the Ohio region was highly vulnerable to power distribution grid instability. Ohio is where the problem began.

The report continues that had the situation been properly addressed, the cascading blackout that sped across states from Michigan to New York and into Canada probably would have been averted. In fact, investigators said that something as simple as shutting off 200 megawatts of power an hour prior to the blackout might have kept the problem from spreading.

This is the final report by investigators who looked into the cause of last summers electrical breakdown. They are urging Congress to impliment strict government standards to ward off future outages. (Published reports)

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Break 1

>From beneath the Southern Cross in Auckland, New Zealand and the United States of America, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the WD6HFR repeater serving Palomar, California.

(5 sec pause here)

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THE BPL FIGHT: NC POWER COMPANY MAKE INTERFERENCE CLAIMS

Meantime, a North Carolina power company says that the interference coming from its BPL system is not harmful to ham radio operations. As reported last week, Progress Energy claims it has solved almost all of the problems to the Amateur bands created by its test installation near the city of Raleigh. But local hams have a different view. Newsline's Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, takes an in-depth look at the claims being made by Progress Energy and what the ham radio community has to say:

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The FCC has received its first reply from a BPL system operator to a complaint about BPL interference. Progress Energy, which operates three BPL trials near Raleigh, North Carolina, says that they are in full compliance with Part 15. Their letter attempts to set a mark for "harmful interference" to home stations, and makes a claim that BPL doesn't cause harmful interference to mobiles because they drive by so quickly.

When the Progress Energy trial began in January, Amperion, the equipment vendor, set the hardware up with signals on the overhead lines that covered the 10 and 12 meter ham bands, and most of the spectrum in between. The signals appear as a series of carriers, 1.1 kHz apart, covering 6 MHz of spectrum for each 2000 feet of power line.

Hams complained to the FCC, and Amperion moved the spectrum used. They attempted to operate in spectrum between the 20 and 15-meter bands, with a notch blocking BPL signals across the 17-meter band. They missed the mark a little, with BPL signals starting at 14.3 MHz, 50 kHz inside the 20-meter band. And while the notch at 17 meters did reduce the signal strength, the BPL carriers were still audible, and might be heard by home stations for a

block or two, if there were any hams living in the trial area_ but there are no hams living there.

In addition, the BPL signals don't end with a "brick wall" filter at the edge of their spectrum block. They trail off slowly. And those "fringe" signals were still falling inside several ham bands, again expected to be audible to a ham within a block or two of the power line.

After giving Amperion time to correct the apparent errors, hams complained again to the FCC. The result was a meeting between Raleigh hams and a Progress Energy engineer in the trial area on April 6th to review the complaint and the spectrum used. Bill Godwin, the Progress Energy engineer, had arranged to be able to talk to an Amperion technician to make adjustments to the spectrum used in real time - but, the technician was a no-show on the telephone.

On April 13th, hams checked the spectrum used again, and still no changes had been made.

On April 20th, Len Anthony, Regulatory Affairs attorney for Progress Energy, sent e-mail to the James Burtle, Chief of the FCC's Experimental Licensing Division, claiming that after moving the BPL signals off the ham bands, their system "is not causing any harmful interference and is in full compliance with the FCC's Part 15 rules."

Referring to the April 6th observation with Bill Godwin, Anthony says, "These tests revealed a small level of interference at the fringes of certain frequencies. Since that time, further modifications have been made to address this fringe interference. It is Progress Energy's position and interpretation of the FCC's rules with regard to `harmful interference' that any interference that may still exist is not `harmful' as that term is defined by the FCC's rules. This level of interference does not seriously degrade ham radio operation or transmissions or cause repeated interruptions. Importantly" he continues, "since Progress Energy can make modifications to completely eliminate any interference with fixed ham operators, the only impact of any kind upon ham operations is upon mobile operators."

As for mobiles, Anthony continues, "Given that any interference experienced by a mobile operator only occurs within close proximity to the BPL facilities, such interference would be very short lived. Thus, Progress Energy is not causing any harmful interference and is in full compliance with the FCC's Part 15 rules."

An observation of the trial area on April 21st, the day after the e-mail was sent to the FCC, revealed that there had been no changes to the spectrum used. The overhead line was still emitting a full-strength signal on the top 50 kHz of the 20 meter band; signals were still audible in the notch at 17 meters, and the "fringe" carriers were still encroaching on the bottom 50 kHz or so of the 15 meter band.

This is the first claim by a BPL operator that weak BPL signals do not create "harmful" interference by the FCC's definition, interference that "seriously degrades, obstructs or repeatedly interrupts a radiocommunication service." Ham operators, of course, routinely tune through quiet spectrum looking for weak signals, and a series of carriers

one kHz apart covering the band might be considered to seriously degrade, obstruct or repeatedly interrupt that activity.

And a mobile driving 35 miles per hour along a BPL-carrying power line can be in the interference zone for a minute or more - and much longer in stop-and-go traffic, waiting at signal lights, or stopping in a driveway or parking lot.

Frank Lynch W4FAL, an ARRL Technical Specialist for North Carolina who has been concentrating on the Progress Energy BPL trial, says that he will be filing another complaint with the FCC, responding to the Progress Energy e-mail. He also says that hams are not opposed to BPL per se, just the interference it causes. And he notes that it should be easy to clear up interference in a small trial area. It's BPL signals buzzing around every power line in town that have him worried.

Reporting for Newsline, this is Gary Pearce KN4AQ in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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Once the new interference complaint is filed it will be up to the FCC to investigate it and to take whatever action it deems necessary. (ARNewsline(tm), KN4AQ)

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RADIO LAW: PETITION TO PROHIBIT BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS ON FRS FAILS

A Petition for Rulemaking to prohibit daily business communications in the Family Radio Service has been dismissed by the Commission. Amateur RadioNewsline's Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, has more:

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On August 22, 2002, the Industrial Telecommunciatons Association, Inc. -- or ITA -- filed a petition for rulemaking requesting that the Commission amend Section 95.401(b) of the Commission's Rules. This, to prohibit daily business communications on the Family Radio Service frequencies.

In making its case for the prohibition the ITA said that it was concerned about the unlicensed mix of business and personal users. The ITA said that traditional businesses were using FRS units for daily business needs and thereby limiting the ability of others to engage in the personal communications that the Commission envisioned for FRS.

One of those challenging the ITA petition was the Personal Radio Steering Group. This is an advocacy group for General Mobile Radio Service users who share part of the spectrum with the Family Radio Service. According to the PRSG filing, the FCC specifically indicated in the Regulatory Flexibility Analysis for creating the Family Radio Service that small businesses may use the FRS to conduct their affairs. Also, while FRS congestion does exist in and near sports and recreational facilities, theme parks and shopping malls, little of this congestion is attributable to recurrent business or commercial communications.

Based on this and other information provided by the public, the FCC has concluded that day to day business communications is a valid use of the Family Radio Service. That this was intended in the Report and Order creating the service and that there is little merit to the Industrial Telecommunications Association rules change request.

Reporting for the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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In other words, it is okay to continue to use FRS channels for routine business as well as personal communications needs. The full story is on-line at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-04-1035A1.doc (CGC, FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: OFFERING NON CERTIFIED CB'S FOR SALE BRINGS CITATION

The FCC has gone after yet another purveyor of non certified CB radio gear capable of operating in the ham radio bands. The agency's Daryl Duckworth, NN0W, explains:

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Duckworth: "The FCC's Altanta Office has issued a citation to Jim Norton, the owner of CB Sales and Service in Anniston, Alabama for the sale of non certified CB equipment. Noted in the citation were six different models of non certified exquoipent, five of which had been modified to transmit on Amateur frequencies."

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The FCC alleges that an investigation by its Atlanta Office revealed that on March 11, 2004, Norton offered for sale at his retail store up to eight models of non-certified Citizens Band transceivers all bearing the Galaxy trade name. According to Commission's records, none of these devices have received an FCC equipment authorization which is required for Citizens Band transmitters marketed in the United States. CB Sales was charged with violation of Section 302(b) of the Communications Act, and Section 2.803(a)(1) of the F-C-C's Rules. (FCC, RAIN)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From Auckland, New Zealand and the United States of America, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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RESCUE RADIO: CA HAMS SUPPOERT MS WALK

Members of the Huntington Beach California Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service supported the early morning 2004 MS Walk event on Sunday April 18th. The Huntington Beach volunteer radio operators were on hand at each rest stop along the five and 10 kilometer courses, to provide communications and assist state beach rangers and event management in case an emergency occurred.

There were over 1200 walkers on the beach path taking part in the fund raisuing event. Peter Shores, AD6TN, brought his communications van that is fully equipped with communications gear and emergency supplies. It served as a mobile command post. Another volunteer patrolled the entire course on bicycle.

The communications effort continued until about noon. There were no incidents or injuries reported during the event. (KH6WZ)

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HAMVENTION NEWS : DARA RETURNS TO THE DAYTON HAMVENTION NAME

When thousands of hams return to Dayton, Ohio for Hamvention 2004, they will find that the "Dayton" has returned to the Hamvention. This, with word that the Dayton Amateur Radio Association which sponsors the yearly event has again remamed the gathering the Dayton Hamvention.

According to General Chairman Gary Des Combes, N8EMO, the change is in keeping with the Hamvention's 'going back to the future' theme. It also goes along with the pledge made to return Hamvention to its roots as the biggest and friendliest hometown hamfest, found anyplace in the world.

Des Combes says that for more than half a century the event has been known to the world, and to the world of Amateur Radio as the Dayton Hamvention. He says that Hamvention's ties are to the entire Dayton metropolitan area, to its economy and to the ham radio community of the region.

The 33rd annual Dayton Hamvention opens on Friday, May 14th and runs until Sunday 16th. During those three days the event is expected to draw about 25,000 people from around the world and bring millions of dollars of sales and business to the Dayton area. (Dayton Hamvention)

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HAMVENTION NEWS: THE HAM RADIO TOWN MEETING

And since we are talking the Dayton Hamvention, let me take a moment to invite you to join our producer Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, and an all-star group of guests as we take a trip through time to look at the "traditions" that have made Amateur Radio the great hobby and service that it is today. This, as we at Amateur Rasdio Newsline present the 6th annual Dayton Hamvention "Ham Radio Town Meeting."

This years topic is "IT'S MORE THAN RADIOS -- Keeping The Traditions of Amateur Radio Alive." Bill will be your host and moderator. Joining him will be a whose who group including our leynote speaker Bob Heil, K9EID, of Heil Sound Ltd. Other presenters include Radio School's Gordon West WB6NOA, Worldradio Magazine Editor Nancy Kott WZ8C, Producer/Director Dave Bell W6AQ, Philadelphia newsman Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, to name only a few. Also, if time permits, we will present a screening of the 1990 Icom produced motion picture titled "More Than Radios." This is the story of an "old time ham" who rather reluctantly becomes the Amateur Radio "Elmer" for a teenager thrust into his life on summer.

The festivities begin at 1 P.M. EDT on Saturday, May 15th in Hara Arena Meeting Room 3 and as usual we will have lots of door prizes. If you have the time, we promise you a most entertaining and illuminating two hours reliving the traditions of the hobby and learning that being a ham truly is a lot more than radios. (ARNewsline(tm))

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: CREW CHANGE ON THE ISS

For a time last week there were five astro-hams on board the International Space Station. This as Expedition 9 crew members Mike Fincke, KE5AIT, and Gennady Padalka, RN3DT, arrived at the space outpost on April 21st The trip was made to the Iss using a Russian built Soyuz launcher.

Making the voyage with them was European Space Agency explorer Andr, Kuipers, PI9ISS. The three joined Expedition 8 crew members Mike Foale, KB5UAC, and Sasha Kaleri, U8MIR, who along with Kuipers are on their way back to Earth as this newscast goes to air.

Kuipers may have only spent a bit more than a week on-orbit, but he wasted little time in getting on-the-air. PE1SCW in Deventer in the Netherlands reported hearing PI9ISS in QSO with PI9ESA at 7:50 hours UTC on Saturday May 24th. Bas says that Kuipers signal was very strong signal that was reading 40 db over S-9. A few minutes later Kuipers was in range of Francisco Costa, CT1EAT, in Beja, Portugal. He said that he heard PI9ISS in a scheduled ARISS QSO also at well over S-9.

During their six-month stay on the ISS, Russian Cosmonaut Padalka will serve as the ISS Commander while Fincke will be the science officer and flight engineer. Both are expected on the air before they return home in late October. (ARISS, VHF Reflector, published news reports)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: K6DUE ISS OPERATING EVENT CERTIFICATES

Certificates for those who took part in the K6DUE International Space Station Commemorative Operating Event held earlier this year have been distributed to the international delegates at the ARISS Meeting in the Netherlands on March 26th and 27th. Those picking them up were to forward the certificates to their national Q-S-L distributors who would then distribute them locally.

ARISS International Chairman Frank Bauer, KA3HDO, says that approximately

130 hams will be receiving certificates. The event was held to honor the memory of the late Roy Neal, K6DUE who founded both the SAREX and ARISS programs. Neal, who also served as the Vice President of Amateur Radio Newsline and as a frequent news anchor passed away last August due to complications following heart valve replacement surgery. (ARISS, AMSAT BB)

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WORLDBEAT: NEW ZEALAND TO ARGENTINA COMMEMORATIVE

ZL1AWW is working on plans for a commemorative station to celebrate the 80 th anniversary of the first New Zealand to South America two way contact. This, by Ivan O'Meara Z2AC and Carlos Braggio, RCB8.

The proposed date is May 22nd or 23rd. This original 10,300 kilometer Morse code conversation took place in 1924 and established a world distance record for two-way radio for that era. (GB2RS)

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DX

In D-X, word that the Rodrigues Island 3B9C operation finally went QRT on Monday, April 12th. In their time on the air, the operators racked up a very impressive 153,000 QSO's. QSL this one as you were directed on the air. (OPDX)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: THE NAB 2004 HAM RADIO RECEPTION

And finally, as most of you know, it was Heil Sound Limited hosted the National Association of Broadcasters ham radio reception on Wednesday night April 21st. It was literally a star studded event. Newsline's Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, and his tape recorder were there:

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When Bob Heil, K9EID, and his wife Sarah throw a party, everyone with a ham radio license shows up. And thats exactly the way it was on Wednesday, April 21st when Heil Sound Limited hosted the annual National Association of Broadcasters Ham Radio Reception at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. There was food music and lots of prizes. Some were even personalized:

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Bob Heil Audio: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org

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That was Bob Heil presenting only one of over a hundred prizes given out over the three hours of the gathering. We finally were able to corner Bob Heil and we asked him how this all came about:

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Bob Heil Audio: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org

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Somewhere between 800 to 900 radio amateurs attending the National Association of Broadcasters Convention literally had a hamfest of their own thanks to Bob and Sarah Heil. Thats up by an estimated 40% over past years. Sarah Heil says that for her husband, putting this reception together was a labor of love:

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Sarah Heil Audio: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org

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The 2004 NAB Ham Radio Reception sems to have set several records. More important -- a good time was had by all.

Reporting from near the Convention Center in Las Vegas, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, for the Amateur Radio Newsline.

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For those not aware, the annual Natrional Association of Broadcasters Convention in Las Vegas is the largest gathering of broadcasting and teleproduction professionals in the world. (ARNewsline (tm))

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline @arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the nominating period for the 2004 Amateur Radio Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award is now on. This program is open to any FCC licensed young radio amateur age 18 or younger residing in the contiguous 48 states and who has made a significant contribution to the community, the nation or ham radio though the United States Amateur Radio Service.

More information and a downloadable on-line nominating form is at our website. That's in cyberspace at www.arnewsline.org. The cutoff for nominations this year is midnight on Tuesday, June 31st.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF, in Auckland, New Zealand saying 73 and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.